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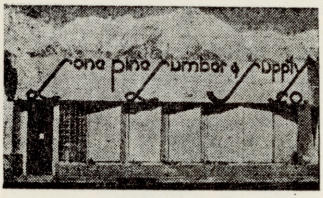

THE LUMBER YARD GANG

Rudie Henderson	Tom Henderson	Ernest Lasky
J. W. McKinney	Clark O'Connell	Chuck Harned
Jesse Browne	John Hale	Guy Martin
Bob Henderson	Edward Hjeltness	Florence Adair
Laura Thouvenell	Bert Zucco	Ralph Scott
Herman Johnson	A. C. Zell	Albert L. Sainz

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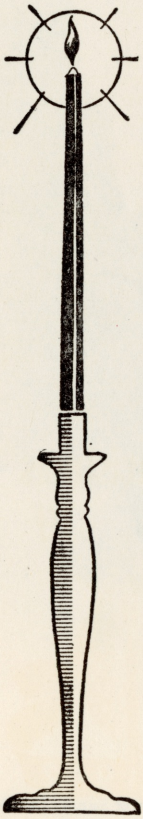


I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old familiar carols play.
And mild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!

Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime,
A chant sublime
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!

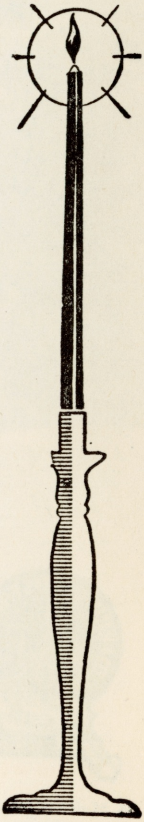
Then from each black, accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South.
And with the sound
The carols drowned
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!

It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearth-stone of a continent,
And made forlorn
The households born
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!

And in despair I bowed my head;
"There is no peace on earth," I said;
"For hate is strong
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!"

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep;
"God is not dead; nor doth He sleep!
The Wrong shall fail,
The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, goodwill to men!"

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



LONE PINE'S FIRST PIANO

(With apologies to Sam Davis)

In 1868—it might have been five years earlier or later; this is not the history for the public schools—there was a little camp known as Lone Pine occupied by upward of 300 miners, every one of whom might have packed his prospecting implements and left for more inviting fields any time before sunset. When the day was over, these men did not rest from their labors like the honest New England agriculturists, but sang, danced, gambled and shot each other as the mood seized them.

One evening, the report spread along the main street (which was the only street) that three men had been killed at Cerro Gordo and that the bodies were coming in. Presently a lumbering old conveyance labored up the road drawn by a couple of horses well worn out with their pull. The cart contained a good sized box and no sooner did its outlines become visible through the glimmer of stray light here and there, than it began to affect the idlers. Death always enforces respect, and even though no one had caught sight of the remains, the crowd gradually became subdued and when the horses came to a standstill, the cart was immediately surrounded. The driver, however, was not in the least impressed with the solemnity of his commission.

"All there?" asked one.

"Haven't examined. Guess so."

The driver filled his pipe and lit it as he continued:

"Wish the bones and load had gone off the Owens River Bridge!"

A man who had been looking on, stepped up to the man at once.

"I don't know who you have in that box, but if they happen to be any friends of mine, I'll lay you alongside."

"We can mighty soon see," said the teamster, cooly. "Just bust the lid off and if they happen to be the men you want, I'm here."

The two looked at each other for a moment and then the crowd gathered a little closer anticipating trouble.

"I believe that dead men are entitled to good treatment, and when you talk about hoping to see corpses go into Owens River, all I have to say is that it will be better for you if the late lamented ain't my friends."

"We'll open the box. I don't take back what I've said, and if my language don't suit your ways of thinking, I guess I can stand it."

With these words, the teamster began to pry up the lid. He got a board off and then pulled out some rags. A strip of something dark, like rosewood, presented itself.

"Eastern coffins, by thunder!"

said several, and the crowd looked quite astonished.

Some more boards flew up and the man who was ready to defend his friends' memory, shifted his weapon a little. The cool manner of the teamster had so irritated him that he had made up his mind to pull his weapon at the first sight of the dead, even if the deceased was his worst and oldest enemy. Presently the whole of the box cover was off and the teamster clearing away the packing revealed to the astonished group the top of something which puzzled all, alike.

"Boys," said he, "this is a pianner."

A general shout of laughter went up and the man who had been so anxious to enforce respect for the dead, muttered something about feeling dry and the keeper of the nearest bar was several ounces better off by the time the boys had given the joke all the attention it called for.

Had a dozen dead men been in the box, their presence in Lone Pine could not have occasioned half the excitement that the arrival of that lonely piano caused. But the next morning it was known that the instrument was to grace a hurdy gurdy saloon owned by Manuel Montano, the leading gambler of the place. It took nearly a week to get his wonder on its legs and the owner was the proudest individual in all of Inyo County. It rose gradually from a recumbent to an upright position amid a confusion of tongues after the manner of the Tower of Babel.

Of course, everybody knew just how such an instrument should be put up. One knew where the "off hind leg" should go, and another was posted on the "front piece."

Scores of men came to the place every day to assist.

"I'll put the bones in good order."

"If you want the wires tuned up, I'm the boy."

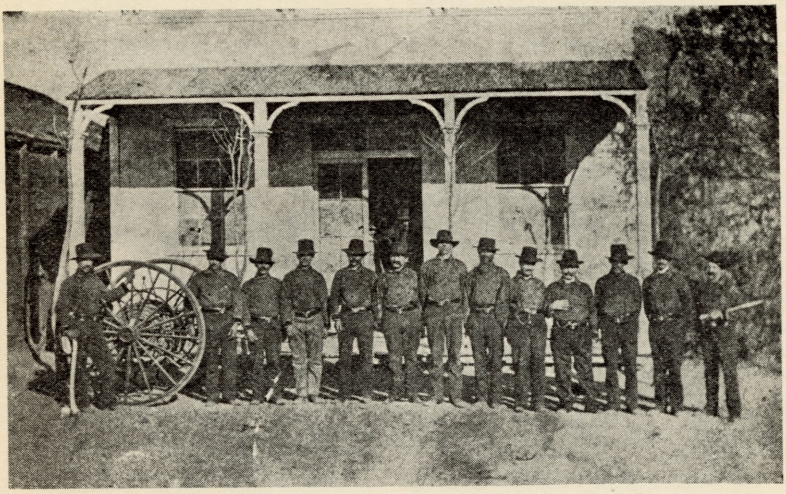
"I've got music to feed it for a month."

Another brought a Paris blanket for a cover, and all took the liveliest interest in it. It was at last in a condition for business.

"It's been showin' its teeth all week. We'd like to have it spit out something."

Alas! There wasn't a man to be found who could play upon the instrument. Montano began to realize that he had a losing speculation on his hands. He had a fiddler and a Mexican who thrummed a guitar. A pianist would have made his orchestra complete. One day a three-card Monte player told a friend confidentially that he could "knock any amount of music out of the piano if he only had it alone a few hours to get his hand in. This report spread about the town but on being quesitoned he vowed that he didn't know a note of music. It was noted, however, as a suspicious circumstance, that he often hung about the instrument and looked upon it longingly like a hungry man gloating over a beefsteak in a restaurant window. There was no doubt but that this man had music in his soul, perhaps in his fingers' ends, but did not dare to make trial of his strength after the rules of harmony had suffered so many years of neglect. So the fiddler kept on with his jigs and the Mexican pawed his discordant guitar, but no man had the nerve to touch the piano. There were doubtless scores of men in the camp who would have given ten ounces of gold dust to have been half an hour alone with it, but every man's nerve shrank from the jeers which the crowd would shower upon him should his first attempt prove a failure. It got to

VOL. FIRE DEPT. IN FRONT OF MONTANO'S SALOON, 1881



LEFT TO RIGHT: RELLES CARRASCO, ABE DIAZ, ROBERT CARRASCO, BUCK HARVEY, RAFAEL OTERO, E. H. EDWARDS, AL MC CRAY, N. G. FUENTES, JOHN BARNES, DICK RICHARDS, HENRY BERRY, MIKE LASKY, AND JOHN STEWART.

be generally understood that the hand which first essayed to draw music from the keys must not slouch its work.

* * *

It was Christmas Eve and Montano, according to his custom, had decorated his gambling hell with sprigs of Mountain Pine and a shrub, whose crimson berries did not seem a bad imitation of English Holly. The piano was covered with evergreens, and all that was wanting to completely fill the cup of Montano's contentment was a man to play the instrument.

"Christmas Night and no pianner pounder," he said. "This is a nice country for a Christian to live in."

Getting a piece of paper he scrawled the words:

$20.00 reward

To a compitant Pianner player

This he stuck up on the music rack and though the inscription glared at the frequenters of the room until midnight, it failed to draw any musician from his shell.

So the merrymaking went on; the hilarity grew apace. Men danced and sang to the music of the squeaky fiddle and worn-out guitar as the jolly crowd within tried to drown the howling of the storm without. Suddenly they became aware of the presence of a white haired man crouching near the fireplace. His garments, such as were left, were wet with melting snow and he had a half-starved, half-crazed expression. He held his thin trembling hands

towards the fire and the light of the blazing wood made them almost transparent. He looked about him once in awhile as if in search of something, and his presence cast such a chill over the place that gradually the sound of revelry was hushed, and it seemed that this waif of the storm had brought in with it all of the gloom and coldness of the warring elements. Montano, mixing a cup of hot egg-nog, advanced and remarked cheerily:

"Here stranger, brace up! This is the real stuff."

The man drained the cup, smacked his lips and seemed more at home.

"Been prospecting, eh? Out in the mountains—caught in the storm? Lively night, this!"

"Pretty bad," said the man.

"Must feel pretty dry?"

The man looked at his streaming clothes and laughed as if Montano's remark was a sarcasm.

"How long out?"

"Four days."

"Hungry?"

The man rose and walking over to the lunch counter, fell to work upon some roast bear, devouring it like any wild animal would have done. As meat and drink and warmth began to permeate the stranger, he seemed to expand and light up. His features lost their pallor and he grew more and more content with the idea that he was not in the grave. As he underwent these changes, the people about him got merrier and happier and threw off the temporary feeling of depression which he had laid upon them.

"Do you always have your place decorated like this?" He finally asked of Montano.

"This is Christmas Eve," was the reply.

The stranger was startled.

"December 24th, sure enough."

"That's the way I put it up, pard."

"When I was in England, I always kept Christmas. But I had forgotten that this was the night. I've been wandering about in the mountains until I've lost track of the feasts of the Church."

Presently his eye fell upon the piano.

"Where is the player?" he asked.

"Never had any," said Montano, blushing at the expression.

"I used to play when I was young."

Montano almost fainted at the admission.

"Stranger, do tackle it, and give us a tune. Nary man in this camp ever had the nerve to wrassle with that music box." His pulse beat faster, for he feared that the man would refuse.

"I'll do the best I can," he said.

There was no stool, but seizing a candle box he drew it up and seated himself before the instrument. It only required a few seconds for a hush to come over the room.

"That old coon is going to give the thing a rattle."

The sight of a man at the piano was something so unusual that even the Faro dealer who was about to take in a $50 bet on the tray, paused and did not reach for the money. Men stopped drinking with the glasses at their lips. Conversation appeared to have struck with a sort of paralysis and cards were no longer shuffled.

The old man brushed back his long white locks, looked up to the ceiling, half closed his eyes, and in a mystic sort of reverie, passed his fingers over the keys. He touched but a single note, yet the sound thrilled the room. It was the key to his improvisation and as he wove his chords together, the music laid its spell upon every ear and heart. He felt his way

along the keys like a man treading uncertain paths, but he gained confidence as he progressed, and presently bent to his work like a master. The instrument was not in exact tune but the ears of his audience through long disuse, did not detect anything radically wrong. They heard a succession of grand chords, a suggestion of paradise, melodies here and there, and it was enough.

"See him counter with his left!" said an old rough, enraptured.

"He calls the turn every time on the upper end of the board," responded a man with a stack of chips in his hand.

The player wandered off into the old ballads they had heard at home. All the sad and melancholy and touching songs that came up like dreams of childhood, this unknown player drew from the keys. His hands kneaded their hearts like dough and squeezed out tears as from a wet sponge.

As the strains flowed one upon the other, the listeners saw their homes of long ago reared again. They were playing once more where the apple blossoms sank through the soft air to join the violets on the green turf of the old New England states; they saw the glories of the Wisconsin maples and the way of the Indian summer blending their hues together; they recalled the heather of Scottish hills, the White cliffs of Britain and heard the sullen roar of the sea as it beat upon their memories vaguely. Then came all the old Christmas Carols such as they had sung in church 30 years before; the subtle music that brings up the glimmer of wax tapers, the solemn shrines, the evergreen, holly, mistletoe, and surpliced choirs. Then the remorseless performer planted his final stab in every heart with "Home, Sweet

Meet the Gang . . .

No. 7

JIMMY THE RED

The 35 pounds of bulk at the left is not literally a member of the Gang. However, Jimmy the Red has monopolized so much of SAWDUST's space that we include him with some justification as he is the only one who still has implicit faith in Santa Claus.

Jimmy the Blonde might well be his name as his Titian locks are now considerably bleached.

Jimmy the Red is unpredictable in many ways. Last month Charlie Sumner had him up in his airplane some 2,000 feet when even his kidneys proved unpredictable.

Home."

When the player ceased. the crowd slunk away from him. There was no more revelry and devilment left in his audience. Each man wanted to sneak off to his shack and write the old folks a letter. The day was breaking as the last man left the place and the player, laying his head down on the piano, fell asleep.

"I say, pard," said Montano, "don't you want a little rest?"

"I feel tired," the old man said. "Perhaps you'll let me rest here for the matter of a day or so."

He walked behind the bar where some old blankets were laying and stretched himself upon them.

"I feel pretty sick. I guess I won't last long. I've got a brother up in Lone Pine Canyon—his name, Harvey. He don't know I'm here. Can you get him before morning? I'd like to see his face once before I die."

Montano started up at the mention of the name. He knew Harvey well.

"He your brother? I'll have him here in half an hour."

As Montano dashed out into the storm, the musician pressed his hand to his side and groaned. Montano heard the word "hurry!" and sped up the canyon to Harvey's cabin. It was quite light in the room when the two men returned. Harvey was pale as death.

"My God! I hope he's alive! I wronged him when we lived in England twenty years ago."

They saw the old man had drawn the blankets over his face. The two stood a moment awed by the thought that he might be dead. Montano looked at the blanket and pulled it down, astonished. There was no one there!

"Gone!" cried Harvey wildly.

"Gone!" echoed Montano pulling out his cash drawer.

"Ten thousand dollars in the sock and the Lord knows how much loose change in the drawer!"

The next day the boys got out, followed a horse's tracks through the snow and lost him in the trail leading toward Fort Independence.

There was a man missing from Lone Pine. It was the three-card Monte player who used to deny point blank that he could play the scale. One day they found a wig of white hair and called to mind when the stranger had pushed those locks back when he looked towards the ceiling for inspiration on the night of December 24, 1868.

—SD—

THE BOY WHO SCOFFED AT SANTA CLAUS

"I don't believe in Santa Claus,
There ain't no such a man!
It's all a fairy tale, because
I know from Cousin Dan"—
'Twas thus spoke Henry Lucius Stout,
A boy aged eight I knew.
His mother said, "You'd best watch out
You're standin' near the flue."

Now, Santa happened just to be
Upon the roof, right pat,
A-peekin' down if he could see
What Lucius Stout was at.
He heard those words with angry frown
And up and shook his head,
And took his book and wrote 'em down
Exactly what he said.

When Christmas mornin' came around,
And Lucius ran to see
What he had got, alas! he found
His stockin' quite empty,
Except a note that he pulled out
Instead of some fine toy:
"I don't believe in Lucius Stout
There ain't no such boy!"

—William Wallace Whitelock.

RETROSPECTION
Lone Pine
December — 1925

R. J. Bandhauer, Manzanar merchant, purchased the J. E. Eibershutz business in Independence . . . Jack Hoxie Company staged benefit in High School Auditorium in conjunction with local talented folks and raised $128.00 for Athletic Field track. Ena Gregory and Fay Wray did the Charleston. The evening was concluded by the introduction of Lone Pine's baby star: Miss Patricia Skinner—approximate age, six months . . . Dr. Loundagin appeared at Gun Club costume ball in Ku Klux Klan regalia. The following are excerpts from the Mt. Whitney Observer's front page feature: One local citizen who had probably imbibed in essence of pick-handle sufficiently to summon enough nerve to be so impolite as to raise Doc's hood, discovered to his painful regret as he rubbed the vicinity of his trousers about six inches south of his belt where a neatly placed punt had just landed that apparently a wildcat was concealed behind that mask. Accosted later by two men one of them topped off his remarks to Doc: "You are a fine oil-can, you are." And the other parried with: "Now laying all knives and guns aside, how do you stand?" He soon found out, for as he came to in a distant corner, he must have had visions of having connected with a pile-driver. The other party, as a starter, received a beautiful jolt that undoubtedly placed his kisser out of commission for several days. Doc may be old, and he may be short-winded, but as one on-looker expressed it: "Boy! What a wicked fist that man does swing!"

SENTENTIOUS ANECDOTES

"Government administrators, hysterical over the critical aspects of the transportation problem, have threatened tire and car confiscation, and mileage rationing on various plans that would have utterly destroyed the civilian economy."—Standish L. Mitchell, L.A.

"World business demands world political organization. But on the Golden Rule basis. It is the only possible way. And we are far from that in local and national politics at home. Most other if not all countries, also. But a start must be made on the Atlantic Charter indications. Great Britain (example: India) is no nearer yet than when Lloyd George and Clemenceau knifed Wilson at Paris and Versailles."—F. G. S., Tyler, Texas.

"I cannot pass over the political scene without making this slight observation which no doubt has occupied the thoughts of many others. I often wonder how men like Fish, Englebright, et al, with records so short on foresight regarding the security and progress of our American ideology, feel about the vicious circumstances which have caused them to do such a quick right about face in their political convictions—not so much in the interests of the nation as in the saving of their respective faces in view of what has happened. If I had been so short-sighted and dilatory as these gentlemen and others of their stripe, at the same time still granting that it is human to err, I would have followed the example of the Arabs of old, folded my tents and silently stolen away to the calm, peaceful night of private life."—W. J. P., New York City.

Wallpaper

Christmas in Lone Pine is vastly different this year. Somehow there seems to be something lacking. Perhaps it is the dearth of lights and greenery that decked our streets and homes. Undoubtedly it is the war. And at a time when Christmas should mean more than ever . . . The Liliputian & Epizootic is again rolling off enough mileage to make a round-trip from Lone Pine to Los Angeles . . . Did it ever occur to you that perhaps the reason Hitler has never declared war on Sweden is to have a safe haven to flee to just as the Kaiser did to Holland? . . . Recently we heard the story of the fellow who's taking up bee-keeping as a hobby. He explains that he's been stung every other way and he doesn't want to miss anything . . . The latest guess is that the congressional candidate from Lone Pine entered the race to have an income tax deduction. Any candidate for political office figuring on deducting for tax purposes such expenses as advertising, mileage, or any other costs connected with his campaign, is due for a sad jolt to the tune of 25% penalty and 6% interest . . . Say what you will, the flaunting of the natural law of supply and demand with price ceilings, inevitably reduces production . . . Readers have frequently commented that in our monthly Retrospection column that we deal with days gone by rather facetiously. We wish to assure you that all extracts are verbatim from the files of the Mt. Whitney Observer . . . Our yard wit calls his girl friend "Sugar," because she's hard to get . . . After months of effort, we offer you the official 1940 census for the following towns: Big Pine, 484; Bishop, 1490; Independence, 540; Lone Pine, 1,022; Keeler, 665; Olancha, 197; Bridgeport, 294; Leevining, 140 . . .

Our 1943 calendar is available for the asking . . . Johnny Morris has certainly had a siege of operations and hospitalization. We all sincerely hope that he is now enroute to his former hale and hearty self . . . Did you ever hear Ed Attaway somberly recounting his experiences with his first Model T? Fili Castro, the salesman, drove Ed around the block to teach him how it should be operated. Ed then took it alone and parked it on the south side of Burkhardt's bar. After properly observing the event, Ed returned to the Model T, and forgot how to put it in reverse. Like Popeye, he made his own entrance through the wall. Slim Honerlah patched up the building. The Model T had the famed splash oil system. The first time Ed drove up the Zinc Hill he burned out the front connecting rod. He hoofed it seven miles back to Darwin, laboriously replaced it, started down the other side of Zinc Hill in compression and burned out a back connecting rod while grinding down. Thereafter, Ed deferred replacement of bearings until he had driven both up and down that famed hill. Ed says he always had the tops of his shoes cut off making emergency replacements of transmission bands out on the desert. Ed's career with the Model T ended at the top of Ruiz Hill in Lone Pine Canyon, when it caught on fire. He walked away and let it burn to the axles . . . As Dr. Smith says: "Many a true word is spoken through false teeth." . . . We have long suspected that the

author of those famous lines: "Backward, turn backward, oh time in thy flight," had a note coming due at the bank . . . Lumber mills are getting away with everything but murder these days. As a result we have approximately 40,000 feet of rejects and used lumber that we are disposing of at $10.00 per ton. With coal at $20.00 this may help your fuel problem . . . While decorating our store a recent Sunday, the Gang commented that we were doing this same thing last December 7th, just as the radio announced the holocaust in Boston . . . Ebenezer Scrooge in Dickens' Christmas Carol, said: "I will honor Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present and the Future. The spirit of all three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach" . . . These December mornings a janitor would rather sleep than heat . . . An orator, according to the Army, is a fellow who is ready to lay down your life for his country . . . We opine that it would be well for the recalcitrant internees at Manzanar to learn that there is nothing stronger than the U. S. Government, and nothing tougher than the Army . . . Besides, we've got a war to take care of without a vocal minority of internees requiring several hundred troops to give them their periodical attention . . . Quote of the month from the Manzanar Free Press: "When the holiday season draws near, the nostalgia for the old remembered things again tugs at the heartstrings. If we, here, only 300 miles from our former homes and still intact as families, experience such strong yearnings for home, how sharp must be the nostalgia of those men on the white sands of West Africa or on the fire-strafed beachheads of New Guinea" . . . The coming of cold weather brought to an end all of those fine hand-outs of fruits and vegetables from Mr. and Mrs. Jim Hodgman . . . Although lumber has been stacking up in our yard it is due to the 35-mile per hour slow-down on the outgo. Lumber receipts have been much lower than last year. The West Coast industry is short 41,500 workers according to Arthur Upson, or about 32 percent in number of men and 40 percent in efficiency . . . Did you ever stop to think that an insurance premium will not break you, but a loss may? . . . A billion dollars is still a lot of money. If a boy of nine began counting a hundred dollars a minute, forty hours a week, he would not reach the billion level until he was ninety years old . . . First Christmas greeting of the season arrived from Corporal Roy G. Bellas of the 11th Field Artillery . . . Corp. Juan Perez also honored us with a recent card mailed from Hawaii . . . One good thing about beginning at the bottom is that you always have something solid to go back to . . . We shall miss Mayor La Trivia on the Fibber McGee programs, now that he has joined the U. S. Coast Guard . . . Now that gas rationing is in effect we shall miss the friendly calls of such folks as Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Halliday, Mr. and Mrs. John Dorwood, the Rudie Krauts and scores of others . . . As one might say on Dec. 31st—So ends the year Nineteen Hundred and Fortitude.

Behind the Bandsaw—

Interested old lady questioning model: "Do you mean to say you'd pose for a man with no clothes on?"

Model: "Heavens, no! He wears pants and everything."

First She: "Does your husband talk in his sleep?"

Second She: "No, and it's terribly exasperating. He just grins."

—SD—

Dad: "When I was a little boy, Willie, I didn't tell lies."

Willie: "How old wuz you when you started?"

MIRRORS

. . . . You know she will appreciate mirrors. *Ours* are all made of genuine Pittsburgh Plate Glass and beautifully gift packaged.

A variety of styles and sizes from . . .

$3.75 to $17.95